UC RIVERSIDE | College of Natural & Agricultural Sciences

# BIOL 252 Seminar Series
# Fall 2026



## Dr. Melissa Kemp

UT Austin, Integrative Biology

***Talk Title***

***"Looking back to move forward: Using fossil record to understand how species respond to a changing world."***

**Thursday November 5, 2026| 04:00 pm**
**Genomics Auditorium 1102A**

**Biography**: Melissa Kemp is an evolutionary biologist who uses the fossil record and historical data to investigate species responses to global change phenomena. Appointed also in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at UT Austin, she earned her B.A. in biology from Williams College and her Ph.D. in biology from Stanford University, where she was a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellow, a Stanford DARE Fellow and a National Geographic Young Explorer. She then served as an NSF Environmental Fellow at Harvard University, where she completed her postdoctoral research at the Harvard Center for the Environment. There she investigated how past global change forces have altered species distributions in Anolis lizards, helping reveal population trajectories before, during and after environmental perturbations and providing a framework for evaluating future range shifts. She has served on the faculty of the Department of Integrative Biology at UT Austin since 2018, publishing widely on how vertebrate biodiversity and communities have responded to past environmental change—integrating conservation paleobiology, evolutionary ecology, and paleontology to study extinction, diversification, colonization, and trait-based responses to global change through deep time. Her research in Texas and in the Caribbean illuminates trends from the last 20,000 years that can shed light on major questions about the roles of climate and human migration in determining the fate of various species.